



EXHIBIT 2
DATE 1/22/15
HB 86

MONTANA SECRETARY OF STATE

LINDA McCULLOCH

HB 86: Revise When Absentee Ballots are Available
House State Administration, Rm 335
January 22, 2015 @ 9:00 a.m.
Secretary of State Linda McCulloch's Testimony

- Good afternoon Mr. Chair, members of the committee. For the record, I am Linda McCulloch, Montana Secretary of State.
- House Bill 86 changes the date absentee ballots are available from 30 days before the election to 25 days before the election.
- It is important that county election administrators have enough time to enter updated voter registration information into the statewide voter registration system before absentee ballots are mailed.
- This bill gives all election officials 5 days after the close of regular voter registration to update registration and absentee information before mailing ballots.
- Twenty-five days is consistent with current law for elections that are conducted solely by mail and is slightly more than the 22 day average time ballots must be available across all of the states that offer early absentee voting.
- While 30 days worked when only 15% of those voting were voting absentee, with the drastic increase in the number of citizens choosing to vote by mail, more time between the close of registration and when ballots are available is needed.
- The ability to keep address information up to date before ballots are mailed is critical, especially when half of the citizens voting are voting by mail, and I support this bill to give election officials the necessary time to do just that.
- Thank you for your time today and to Representative Custer for bringing forward this legislation.